



Maine Forest Service Consultants Newsletter & Ice Storm Update #9 February 2000



Timber Harvesting Guidelines Near Vernal Pools

Vernal pools provide critical habitat for a number of amphibians and invertebrates, some of which breed only in these unique ecosystems, and/or may be rare, threatened, or endangered species. Although vernal pools may only hold water for a period in the spring, the most important protective measure is learning to recognize these pool locations, even in the dry season. Foresters can then incorporate the guidelines below into their plans that ensure that these habitats thrive.

Vernal Pool and Depression No activity

Objective 1: Maintain the physical integrity of the pool depression and its ability to hold seasonal water.

a. Keep heavy equipment out of the pool depression at all times of the year. Rutting here could cause the water to drain too early, stranding amphibian eggs before they hatch. Compaction could alter water flow and harm eggs and/or larvae buried in leaf litter at the bottom of the depression.

b. Prevent sedimentation from nearby areas of disturbed soil, so as not to disrupt the pool's breeding environment.

c. Keep tree tops and slash out of the pool depression. Although amphibians often use twigs up to an inch in diameter to attach their eggs, none should be added, or existing branches removed. If an occasional top does land in the pool depression, leave it only if it falls in during the breeding season and its removal would disturb newly laid eggs or hatched salamanders.

Shade Zone 50 ft. buffer around pool edge

Objective 2: Keep a shaded condition in this 50 ft. wide buffer zone around the pool depression. Amphibians require that the temperature and relative humidity at the soil surface be cool and moist.

a. Light, partial cuts which can maintain this microclimate are acceptable; clear cuts are not.

b. Understory vegetation such as mountain laurel, hemlock, advanced regeneration, or vigorous hardwood sprouts after a harvest will help to maintain this condition. Avoid leaving only trees

with small or damaged tops, or dead and dying trees.

Objective 3: Minimize disturbance of the forest floor.

a. Operate in this area when the ground is frozen and covered with snow, whenever possible.

When operations must be scheduled in dry seasons, keep equipment 50 feet away from the pool depression and winch out logs.

b. Avoid operating during muddy conditions which would create ruts deeper than 6 inches. They can be an impediment to migrating salamanders, some of which are known to use the same vernal pools and migratory routes for 15 to 20 years.

c. Minimize disturbance of the leaf litter and mineral soil which insulate the ground and creates proper moisture and temperature conditions for amphibian migrations.

Low Disturbance Zone 50-200 ft. from pool edge

Objective 4: As above, minimize disturbance of the forest floor in this area.

a. Operate equipment in this area when the ground is frozen and covered with snow, whenever possible.

b. and c. Same as in 3 above.

d. Locate landings and heavily used skid roads outside of this area. Be sure any water diversion structures associated with skid trails and roads keep sedimentation from entering the shaded zone and vernal pool.

Adapted for the 1992 NESAF meeting from guidelines which were cooperatively developed by foresters and wildlife biologists in Massachusetts.

1999 Landowner Reports

Just a reminder that the 1999 Landowner Reports are due not later than January 31, 2000. Which means that if you haven't sent yours in and you're reading this, you're already late. More than 12,000 report forms were mailed out in December and January (meaning there were more than 12,000 active harvests in Maine in 1999). As of February 7, 2000, 8,636 reports have been returned (71%)

What Do Trees Have to do with IT?

Maine Forest Service is Developing a Community Planning Guide on How and Why to Include Trees, Forests, Soils, and Water in a Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Workshops will also be available.

What do trees have to do with comprehensive land use planning? Plenty. Put street trees, town parks, community forests, and small wooded properties together and you have a major piece of community infrastructure with aesthetic appeal and economic wallop.

When included in the town planning process, the woods in your town can reduce costs associated with heating and cooling municipal buildings, and reduce costs related to seasonal flooding, erosion, and emergency services like fire fighting. Forest products, ranging from firewood and timber to fir boughs and maple syrup, are a significant component of local economies in some towns. In others, street trees enhance the town's beauty, which attracts both businesses and shoppers. Properly managed community woodlands and parks attract recreationists, provide wildlife habitat, and may be a source of town revenue. Towns that don't consider managing their woods and the soil and water associated with them run the risk of making planning decisions with incomplete information that is likely to cost money in the future -- either directly through clean-up or mitigation efforts, or indirectly by the loss of vitality that originally attracted homeowners, businesses, and visitors.

The Maine Forest Service, in partnership with other organizations, will offer six **Woods In Your Town** workshops in late April and May. These workshops will cover how the woods in your town work, how they fit into community infrastructure, and how to assess their value to economics, water, soil, wildlife, recreation, and quality of life. Those attending the workshop will practice using problem solving frameworks and apply them to real life planning dilemmas in Maine towns.

A free planners guide **What Do Trees Have to Do With It?** will provide additional planning tools -- including inventory checklists for assessing natural resources, a bibliography of hands-on planning guides and personal contacts, plus communication/education strategies that will increase community awareness of the comprehensive land use planning process. The guide will be available in late April.

Workshop Locations:

Hancock/Washington Counties

Sagadahoc/ Androscoggin Counties

Knox/Lincoln/Waldo Counties

Cumberland/York Counties

Oxford/Franklin Counties

Penobscot/Somerset Counties

For more information, contact Kris Parrish at the Maine Forest Service at (207) 287-1061.

TMDL who?

Maine Forest Service submitted comments on EPA's proposed rules for the TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) process and NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permit program. These programs, developed under the Clean Water Act, were originally developed to deal with point source pollution. EPA is proposing to include forestry under these programs, essentially by defining "silviculture" as a point source. MFS expressed substantial reservations regarding this and related changes to the program, arguing instead that water quality issues attributed to forestry are properly addressed through Best Management Practices and state-level water quality programs. The Departments of Conservation and Environmental Protection issued joint comments noting that the increased complexity of the programs, for which DEP is currently obtaining "delegation authority", were not accompanied by increased resources; and that the state's programs would be unduly burdened by additional technical requirements, federal oversight, and inappropriate avenues for policy debate. The letter pointed out that EPA, in its review of Maine's August 1999 "Nonpoint Source Control Program: Program Upgrade and 15-year Strategy", described Maine's nonpoint source program as "exemplary... one of the best in the nation".

For more on the MFS and DOC comments on the proposed TMDL/NPDES rules, contact Morten Moesswilde, 287-8430.

Permit by Rule Adopted

On January 20th the Board of Environmental Protection adopted the Permit by Rule standards and process that had been in flux since June. The rule includes provisions regarding the standards themselves for stream crossings (see earlier newsletter), but now allows multiple crossings to be included on a single PBR, as long as they are in the same town. Stream crossing PBRs that are submitted between October 1 and July 15 will also have a 14-day waiting period, during which DEP will have the PBR reviewed by three additional agencies, who may comment on the timing of the proposed construction with regard to fisheries issues. Temporary crossings that do not involve fill are still exempt from PBR. The agencies that

will be reviewing the PBRs are Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W), Marine Resources (DMR), and the Atlantic Salmon Commission (ASC). DEP has the option of denying the PBR based on the potential for unreasonable impact on water quality or fisheries, based on input from these agencies. Applicants may also obtain advance written approval from IFW, DMR, and ASC and submit it with the PBR, thereby streamlining the process somewhat.

For more on the current Permit by Rule standards, contact DEP, 287-3901, or Morten Moesswilde, MFS, 287-8430.

Atlantic Salmon - Proposed Listing

The proposed listing of Gulf of Maine Atlantic Salmon as endangered in eight Maine rivers is generating increasing levels of discussion. Recently the Federal Services hosted well-attended public hearings in Machias, Ellsworth, and Rockland. More information on Atlantic salmon, including the Service's 1999 Status Review is available at: <http://news.fws.gov/salmon/asalmon>. The proposed listing can be found at: <http://endangered.fws.gov/frpubs/99nov.htm>.

The deadline for written comments on the proposed listing has been extended until March 15, and should be sent to either of the following addresses:

Chief, Division of Endangered Species
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035

or
Endangered Species Program Coordinator,
National Marine Fisheries Service
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

For information on Maine Forest Service's part in the state's Atlantic Salmon Conservation Plan, please contact Morten Moesswilde, 287-8430.

Ice Storm Update

As of January 31, 2000 forest consultants have completed 1688 forest management plans (full plans, updates, and woodlot assessments) through the ice storm Forest Stewardship Assistance Program. These plans covered 214,984 acres, with cost-share disbursements of \$1,457,273.49. There have been 3411 applications for assistance for management planning.

Ice storm SIP funding is starting to get tight. We have committed almost \$3.7 million of the \$3.79 million available to us. Maine Forest Service District Foresters are starting to cancel applications from landowners who were approved more than a year ago, but have not begun work on their practices. This will recycle some of the funds back to landowners who are doing the work on their woodlots. As of January 31, 2000, the SIP ice storm program has reimbursed landowners more than \$1.2 million for practices completed.

REMINDER!!! All Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) practices and Forest Stewardship Assistance (FSA) management plans funded under the ice storm money, must be completed (full, completely, all paperwork in, no exceptions) by **April 1, 2001**.

Management Plans

Maine Forest Service District Foresters have started to use the new guidelines for review of forest management plans approved after November 1, 1999. There have been very few problems with the new guidelines as most forest consultants already write an excellent plan.

However, if there is a problem with a plan, MFS foresters now have a protocol to follow for helping the consultant meet the standards:

If there's a minor problem, then the MFS forester will call the consultant and ask for a correction, with a follow-up letter from the MFS for the records.

If the consultant does not make the correction after a certain period of time, the MFS district forester will send a second letter requesting additional information. The landowner will also receive a letter at this time, letting them know that their payment has been delayed.

Remember, MFS District Foresters are happy to look at drafts of management plans before they are finally submitted and will answer any questions you may have regarding format or content of a plan.

Seminar in Environmental Studies:

The Northern Forest

An interesting seminar series is being held at Bowdoin College. Titled "Seminar in Environmental Studies - The Northern Forest", the series is free and open to the public. Sessions are held on Mondays from 2:30-4:00 at 315 Searles Hall, Bowdoin College. Contact Professor Peter Palmiotto at (207) 725-3829 for more information. Scheduled speakers are:

Feb. 14 - Lloyd Irland, The Irland Group - Economics of the Forest Product Industry in the Northern Forest and Maine.

Feb. 21 - Dan Smith (Yale University) - *The People and Their Opinions: Social Attitudes in the Northern Forest.*

Feb. 28 - Karen Tilberg (Northern Forest Alliance) - *Maine's Forest Practices Act and Land Conservation in the North Woods.*

Mar. 6 - Jonathan Carter (Forest Ecology Network) - *The Movement to Ban Clearcutting and Maine's National Park.*

Mar. 13 - Barbara Vickery (The Nature Conservancy) - *The Upper St. John River Project: Challenges in Conservation Design.*

Apr. 3 - Sidney Balch (Mead Paper Corp.) - *Industrial Forest Management in Maine.*

Apr. 10 - Kenny Fergusson (Huber Resources Corp.) - *Managing with Regulation.*

Apr. 17 - John Hagan (Manomet Center) - *Shifting Mosaic and Future Direction of Management.*

Apr. 24 - David Vail (Bowdoin College) - *Property Rights and Sustainable Nature Tourism.*

Project Learning Tree Volunteer Opportunity

Since the early 1970's, Project Learning Tree has been recognized as one of the premier environmental educational programs in the World. Through hands-on, interdisciplinary activities, PLT provides students with opportunities to investigate environmental (and forestry) issues and encourages them to make informed, responsible decisions.

PLT uses the forest as a window on the world to increase students' understanding of our forests and environment; to stimulate critical and creative thinking; to develop the ability to make informed decisions on environmental issues; and to instill the confidence and commitment to take responsible action on behalf of the environment.

Supported by a spirited group of volunteers PLT is alive and well in Maine. Jointly sponsored by the Maine Forest Service and the Maine Tree Foundation the program reaches teachers and students from Fort Kent to Kittery. One of the ways to introduce PLT to teachers is through a workshop. These workshops are always facilitated by a **triad** consisting of a resource professional, an educator, and a community leader. These workshops are fun, encourage participation, are thought provoking, and are beneficial to the teachers as well as the facilitators.

If you would like more information about PLT or would like to become a volunteer (as a resource professional) call Pat Maloney, State of Maine PLT

Coordinator @ 626-7990, or Kevin Doran at the Maine Forest Service @ 287-4988.

The Lammert Report Outlook for Markets

Apparently the law of supply and demand was suspended this early winter as log prices didn't move while wet weather continued to keep loggers out of the woods. I heard of one mud bonus but that died with the coming of freeze-up.

The markets are OK to strong for all species except the red pine export-sized pole. Mills are being creative and sawing whatever they can sell, switching species and required log lengths. Commercial chipping operations are massaging the wood they buy for potential saw logs and they are finding them.

Rumors about finger jointing lumber at Maine mills is true and as more units are purchased, mills will be able to make a silk purse from the proverbial ear.

Hard maple veneer is still the King of the Hill. Buyers prefer winter harvested logs so if you have potential veneer logs, you may want to harvest them now.

New mill openings continue. Prentiss & Carlisle started a mill in East Newport and Dennis Carrier is running Kennebec Lumber (Hardwood) Co. just south of Solon.

Good cedar for saw stock and shingles has been hard to find. Cedar mills operating outside of cedar growing areas have had to shut down for lack of logs. Bolter mills have had to buy logs. Sawmills are looking at tree length stems. More sawmills are buying products for other mills. Backhauls from these "new log yards" are becoming commonplace.

Here's hoping we don't have much of a spring break-up.